

General Thomas Sumter wins the Battle of Fishdam Ford, 1780

On this day in history, November 9, 1780, General Thomas Sumter escaped capture in South Carolina by the British Major James Wemyss at the Battle of Fishdam Ford. Instead, Wemyss was wounded in the arm and the knee and was captured by Sumter.

Sumter and Wemyss were arch rivals in the battle between the British and the colonists along the Santee River in east central South Carolina. Sumter's plantation had been burned at the beginning of the summer by the infamous Colonel Banastre Tarleton (the villain in Mel Gibson's "The Patriot" movie). In response, Sumter raised a powerful local militia to terrorize the British in return.

General Wemyss was sent to South Carolina by British General Charles Cornwallis to defeat Francis Marion, also known as the Swamp Fox (Mel Gibson's character in "The Patriot"), an inspiring local figure using guerilla tactics against the British.

Wemyss failed in his mission to take Marion or Sumter. Sumter was however, wounded by Tarleton only a week and a half after Fishdam Ford, forcing him to step down from his position. **Francis Marion stepped up to drive the British out of the Carolinas and into Virginia where they surrendered to George Washington the following year.**